Ryoshu ID:: R.B. Chef de Cuisine
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Ryoshu ID:: R.B. Chef de Cuisine

by AllAborde (Bordementions)

Summary

Those closely related to culinary art—such as the Eight Chefs and the Dochelin Guides—also originate from this place.
This child wants to join the ranks of the prestigious Eight. She uses humans, often called the flowering pinnacles of artistic cuisine, as her main ingredient.

Notes

Hiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii

I'm gonna put a index in the end notes about what each acronym means. Yeah.

I'll finish the rest some day I promise

Disc server for polls https://discord.gg/GPBNYYxExz

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1: Still the first chapter cmon now

The bistro, R.B., sat nestled like a misplaced pearl amidst the gritty backdrop of the Backstreets. On either side, dilapidated pawn shops sagged under the weight of years, their windows dusty and plastered with faded advertisements for long-forgotten remedies and get-rich-quick schemes. Further down the street, the flickering neon sign of a dimly lit gambling den cast long, distorted shadows, punctuated by the occasional burst of raucous shouting. While R.B. wasn't entirely out of place— as the Backstreets harbored all manner of hidden establishments, its presence was undeniably striking. Where its neighbors blended in R.B. stood defiant, a beacon of unexpected refinement. Its façade boasted polished dark wood, gleaming brass fixtures that reflected the meager streetlights like tiny stars, and large windows, though perpetually grimy from the surrounding area. They offered tantalizing glimpses of a warm, inviting interior. Inside, soft light spilled onto plush velvet banquettes and tables draped with crisp white linens.

The cacophony of the Backstreets—the raucous laughter and clattering mahjong tiles from the gambling den, the haggling voices from the pawn shops—began to fade as you approached R.B. These harsh sounds were gradually replaced by a more refined symphony: the soft murmur of conversations, the delicate clinking of silverware against fine china, and the low hum of jazz music that seemed to emanate from some unseen corner within.

But it was the aroma that truly captivated you. It hit you first, a rich, savory scent that promised warmth and comfort, a blend of roasted meats, exotic spices, and something subtly sweet that lingered in the air like a whispered secret. It was a deceptive fragrance, almost too inviting, considering the surroundings. It created a momentary dissonance, a pause where you almost hesitated before pushing open the heavy, ornate doors of the bistro. The doors themselves were a work of art, crafted from dark wood and inlaid with intricate brass patterns, their weight suggesting a barrier between the rough reality of the Backstreets and the refined world within.

Almost. The hesitation was fleeting. Your orders from your director were clear, etched in your mind after several hours of overviewing the request. Not to mention, your office’s reputation was on the line. The whispers had started subtly, rumors circulating from the Backstreets out into the inner parts of the wing, rumors about the R.B. head chef's

unique culinary methods. Whispers of frequent disappearences, of unusual ingredients, and of the history of the establishment. These whispers had eventually led to request being sent to your fixer office, and you were tasked with uncovering the truth. With a resolute breath, you grasped the cold brass handle and pushed the heavy door open, stepping into the warm glow of R.B. and leaving the clamor of the Backstreets behind. Even if it was something horrific, you were a grade 4 fixer. What's the worst that could happen?

The transition from the grimy alleyways to the interior of R.B. was jarring, like stepping through a portal into another world. The deep reds and golds that dominated the color scheme immediately enveloped you, creating an atmosphere of opulent warmth. Plush velvet banquettes lined the walls, inviting patrons to sink into their luxurious embrace, while polished dark wood tables, gleaming under the soft light, were arranged with meticulous precision. Ornate chandeliers, crafted from shimmering crystal and brass, hung from the high ceiling, casting a warm, almost theatrical glow over the diners below. The light danced across the polished surfaces, creating an illusion of even greater spaciousness within the relatively compact bistro.

The air was thick, heavy with the mingled scents of exotic spices and fresh herbs, a fragrant tapestry woven from cinnamon, star anise, rosemary, and thyme. But beneath this palatable bouquet, a different scent lingered—something faintly metallic. It was a subtle undercurrent, a dissonant note beneath the harmonious blend of aromas, a phantom scent that prickled your senses and raised the hairs on the back of your neck. It was this undercurrent that truly set the scene apart, most people probably couldn't tell, but you had been a fixer long enough to notice the smell of blood.

The diners, a diverse mix of individuals, seemed largely oblivious to this. Some were impeccably dressed patrons, their tailored suits and elegant gowns suggesting they were visitors from the higher districts, perhaps venturing into the Backstreets for a taste of the exotic and the forbidden. Others were clearly denizens of District 23, their faces etched with the hardships of life in this neglected corner of the city. Their worn clothing and weary expressions spoke of long days and difficult nights. The contrast between the two groups was stark, guess it shows that R.B. appeals to everyone.

Your gaze settled on a lone figure standing behind the counter, dressed in a typical white button up chef uniform. She was meticulously arranging a display of what appeared to be miniature

meat pies. Each pie was a work of art, perfectly formed and decorated with intricate patterns of delicate pastry, resembling tiny, edible sculptures. The precision of the arrangement, the almost obsessive attention to detail, was striking. This had to be Ryōshū, the head chef at the center of the rumors.

You approached the counter, your eyes continuing to scan the room, taking in every detail: the patterns on the wallpaper, the way the light reflected off the polished silverware, the subtle movements of the other patrons. Nothing in particular seemed overtly out of place, everything that was visible to the people in the dining area was just an unusually fancy resturant in the backstreets.

As you drew closer, Ryōshū finally looked up, her gaze sharp and assessing, like a hawk scrutinizing its prey. Her expression was neutral, almost welcoming, a polite smile playing on her lips. But the smile didn't quite reach her eyes. They remained cold, calculating, holding a depth of knowledge and perhaps even danger that belied the welcoming facade. The warmth of the bistro suddenly felt less inviting, the metallic scent in the air growing stronger, and the tension in the room coalesced into a tangible weight.

"Welcome to R.B.," she says, her voice smooth and even, like polished silk. It held a subtle cadence, a hint of an accent you couldn't quite place. "I trust you've come to try our F.M.P.?" She gestures to the dining area with a delicate hand, the movement almost theatrical, as if she were presenting a grand stage rather than a simple dining room. It was then that you noticed the faint stains on her fingers. They were a dark, reddish-brown, almost the color of dried blood, that contrasted starkly with her skin. They were concentrated around her fingertips and under her nails, as if she had been handling something with a deep, rich pigment. At a glance something like that isn't necessarily suspicious, it could be from spices, perhaps saffron or paprika. But directly confronting her about it now wasn't the best idea, you mentally noted it down, deciding to ignore it for now.

You meet her gaze directly, trying to maintain a friendly, neutral expression of your own, careful not to betray your true purpose. You were playing the part of an inteested customer after all. "Yes, of course, the… F.M.P.," you reply, stumbling slightly over the unfamiliar acronym. You weren't entirely sure what that meant, likely one of the bistro's specialties, perhaps it was some kind of in house language. "I've heard some rather interesting things about your cuisine," you continue, choosing your words with deliberate care, walking a tightrope between politeness and inquiry. "I knew I just had

to see for myself."

A flicker of something—amusement? Recognition? Perhaps even a hint of challenge—crossed Ryōshū's face, her eyes narrowing slightly. It was a fleeting expression, gone as quickly as it appeared, but you caught it, and it confirmed your suspicions: she had a knack for perceptiveness. "Interesting is one word for it," she agrees, her smile widening just a fraction, revealing a hint of sharp teeth beneath. "We pride ourselves on offering unique experiences here at R.B. Our patrons find our dishes a cut above anything else you can find in the area." She pauses, her gaze lingering on you for a moment longer than necessary, her eyes boring into yours with an unnerving intensity. The smile remained fixed on her lips, but her eyes held a different story. "But I can't help but ask," she continues, her voice dropping to a lower register, almost a whisper, "are you here to dine… or something else?" The question hung in the air between you, heavy with unspoken implications.

The subtle metallic scent in the air seemed to intensify, and the low hum of jazz music playing in the background suddenly sounded distorted and unsettling. She knew. She knew you weren't just a casual customer. The smile on her face was now almost predatory. "Your gaze is beyond that of someone simply looking for something to eat," she added, her voice laced with a subtle challenge. "You want more." No, it couldn't have been that fast. Was it the way you were surveying the room? Surely she's just testing you. Perhaps she had already had an encounter with investigators before.

You decide to play along, at least for now. You couldn't afford to be exposed so quickly; you needed a believable cover, a way to gain her trust, or at least buy some time. "Perhaps a little of both," you answer, leaning slightly closer to the counter, lowering your voice to match hers. That metallic scent seemed to be emanating directly from the meat pies, growing stronger as you drew nearer. "I've, uh, always been interested in learning about new… innovative culinary techniques." You watch her closely, scrutinizing her face for any tell, any flicker of doubt or suspicion that might betray her true thoughts.

Ryōshū's expression remains unchanged, her composure unwavering, like a mask firmly in place. "Technique is everything," she says, her voice low and almost conspiratorial, as if sharing a closely guarded secret. "The right touch, the perfect blend of flavors… it's an art form, really." She taps a finger against the polished countertop, the dark, reddish-brown stains on her skin catching your eye again. They seemed darker now, almost black in the dim light, and you noticed

they extended slightly up her wrist, disappearing beneath the cuff of her crisp white chef's jacket. “And like any art form,” she continues, her eyes locking onto yours, “it requires dedication. And the right ingredients.” She pauses, a glint of something unreadable in her eye, a spark that hinted at something darker beneath the surface. “We strive for A.P. here, after all.”

“A.P.?” you ask, raising an eyebrow, feigning ignorance. She'd been using those acronyms for some time now, and while you had your suspicions, you didn't want to press her too early and risk arousing further suspicion.

Ryōshū's smile widens, perhaps she enjoyed when people questioned these phrases of her's. “Of course,” she says, her voice dripping with mock condescension. “Absolute perfection. Only the best will do. It's the key to achieving true culinary artistry.” She gestures subtly towards a door behind the counter, a swift, almost imperceptible movement that you almost missed. It was a plain, unmarked door, blending seamlessly with the dark wood paneling, and you hadn't noticed it before. “If you're truly interested in seeing the artistry behind our dishes,” she continues, her voice laced with a seductive undertone, “perhaps a tour of the kitchen is in order. It's where the real M.A.G.I.C. happens.”

“M.A.G.I.C.?” you repeat, feigning curiosity, playing along with her little game. This was good you had some kind of ground to hold onto again. Maybe she believed you were some kind of food critic, traveling around the City for the best known cuisine you could find. That wasn't even entirely false either, you had been around a decent bit in the city, youcould keep up this facade until you could get what you needed.

“Masterful Application of Gastronomic Ingredients and Culinary techniques,” she explains, her tone light and airy, as if she were reciting a simple, everyday recipe to a coworker. “I'd think that much would be obvious,” she adds with a playful smirk. “We believe in pushing the boundaries of flavor, creating experiences not easily found. That's why you're here is it not, because you couldn't be satisfied by the D.S. that they serve everywhere else?" You couldn't tell if that was a rhetorical question or not, but agreeing with her was the best option here. So you simply nodded along.

“It's all about elevating the S.E.N.S.E.S.” She emphasizes the last word, drawing it out slightly, as if savoring the taste of it on her tongue. But before you could even begin to ask what that had meant

she had raised a hand to silence you.

“Sensational Edible Novelties Stimulating Every Sense,” she replies smoothly, not missing a beat, as if she had recited the phrase countless times. “It’s what we aim for with every dish." She gestures again to the door behind her, a subtle but insistent movement. "Shall we proceed?" she asks, her voice now laced with a hint of anticipation. "It's where the labors of culinary excellence happen." This 'tour' is likely more than just a simple kitchen visit. It was a carefully orchestrated performance, designed to lure you deeper into her web, but you followed her nonetheless.

“Excellent,” she purrs, the word dripping with false sweetness, turning and heading towards the door. She pushes it open, revealing a dimly lit hallway beyond. The air here is noticeably colder, a stark contrast to the warm, inviting atmosphere of the bistro. The rich, savory aroma of the dining area is abruptly cut off, replaced by a cloying sweetness, like overripe fruit, tinged with a metallic tang that made your stomach churn and your nostrils burn. The sounds are different too—faint, muffled noises, like soft whimpers, the drip of liquid, and the rhythmic clang of metal on metal.

You follow her into the hallway, your senses on high alert, every nerve ending screaming at you to turn back. Their were dark stains, almost a black color in places, and the floor is damp beneath your feet, sticking slightly to the soles of your shoes. The hallway opens into a large, cavernous room—the kitchen. But it's not the gleaming, stainless-steel kitchen you might expect in a high-end bistro. Instead, it resembles more of a butcher’s shop, or perhaps even a slaughterhouse.

Heavy iron hooks hang from the low ceiling, some empty, others bearing what you can only assumne is wrapped up meat thats been prepped. Various tools, cleavers, knives, and saws of all shapes and sizes, are scattered across blood-splattered worktables, some still dripping with fresh… something. Large, crimson stains cover almost every surface—the walls, the floor, the tables, even the ceiling in some places. The source of the metallic scent is immediately apparent: blood. Pools of it lie on the uneven stone floor, soaking into the cracks and crevices, and it’s splattered across the walls and even the ceiling, as if some terrible struggle had taken place here. The cloying sweetness you smelled in the hallway was now identifiable: the smell of the next meal being made, it's mingling with the coppery tang of fresh blood. The awful part is though that it smells incredible, whatever mixture of spices and preperation has gone into creating this

mess has left a tantalizing scent in the air.

Ryōshū surveys the gruesome scene with a satisfied sigh, her breath misting slightly in the cool, damp air of the kitchen. “Welcome to the heart of R.B.,” she announces, her voice echoing in the large, cavernous space, the sound bouncing off the blood-splattered walls. “Where the true art is created. Where we achieve true culinary P.E.R.F.E.C.T.I.O.N.” She looks at you, her eyes gleaming with a manic intensity, a disturbing light that reflected the dim, flickering light of the exposed bulbs hanging precariously from the ceiling. “It’s all about the preparation,” she adds, her voice dripping with a perverse kind of pride, as if she were showing you her greatest accomplishment.

You refuse to let the horrific scene faze you. Losing your nerve deep in enemy territory would be an amateur move, and would more than likely get you killed. You try to maintain your composure, focusing on keeping your breathing steady and your expression neutral. You try not to focus on the more gruesome details—the pools of blood, the scattered tools, the unidentifiable objects hanging from the hooks—but your eyes are inevitably drawn to a large, cloth-covered table in the center of the room. The cloth, a heavy, dark canvas, was draped over something large and irregular, and you could make out the faint, unsettling outline of a human form beneath the fabric. The shape was unmistakable: a torso, limbs, a head.

“And what about that?” you ask, gesturing subtly towards the table with a slight tilt of your head, trying to keep your voice casual, as if you were inquiring about a piece of furniture. You needed to gather information, to confirm anything with your own eyes. Nothing was good if you didn't have undeniable proof, otherwise you risk being wrong.

Ryōshū follows your gaze and a slow, chilling smile spreads across her face. It was a smile that promised nothing good, a smile that sent a wave of nausea through you. “Ah, that,” she says, pausing for dramatic effect, her eyes twinkling with amusement. “That’s our next masterpiece in the making. Still in the marinating process, you see. No touching otherwise we'd have to use you instead." A rather crude joke considering the environment that you were in but you guess it was off limits. She was testing you, probing for weaknesses, trying to determine if you were truly who you claimed to be.

“You know you really don’t look like you’re from around here though,” she repeated, her gaze fixed on you, her smile still present but now laced with a sharp edge. “Your clothes are a little too

different. What part of the city are you from?" The implication was clear: you didn't belong in this place, in this part of the city. Your clothes, your demeanor, everything about you screamed "outsider." You needed to think fast, to craft a believable response that wouldn't arouse further suspicion. Stammering or hesitating would only confirm her doubts.

You took a slow, deliberate breath, maintaining eye contact with her. "I'm from District 7," you replied, choosing a district far enough away from the Backstreets to be plausible, but not so far as to seem completely out of touch with the city's underbelly. District 7 was known for its merchant class, a place where business was conducted both legally and otherwise. It was a district where so many different things traveled in and out on a daily basis that you could try things from all over the city. "I'm a food reviewer," you continued, adding a detail to solidify your cover. "I had tried just about everything I could find in district 7, so I had thought about branching out more."
It sounded reasonable enough, you shared an interest in what she did, hopefully that would distract her from further questioning.

You subtly adjusted your jacket, a tailored piece that was indeed out of place in this grimy kitchen, but it was too late to change now. You had to commit to the role. "And when I had caught wind of the type of ingredient that you guys specialize in I just knew I had to come see." You hoped that by alluding to knowing about the cannibalism would reinforce the connection, suggesting a shared interest in the unusual.

You watched her closely, searching for any reaction, any sign that she believed your story. "Heh," Ryōshū chuckled, a low, throaty sound that sent a shiver down your spine. It wasn't a friendly laugh; it was a sound of amusement mixed with something colder, something predatory. "Then maybe you really do belong in the Backstreets," she continued, her eyes narrowing slightly, her gaze piercing. "If you're willing to come this far just to indulge in a taboo like that." The word "taboo" hung in the air, heavy with implication. It was clear she was referring to more than just exotic ingredients; she was talking about something darker, something forbidden. She was testing your limits, gauging your willingness to cross the line.

The muffled whimpers from beneath the cloth-covered table intensified, as if the unseen occupant was reacting to the conversation. The metallic scent in the air grew stronger, almost overpowering, and you fought back the urge to gag. You maintained your composure, however, refusing to show any sign of discomfort or fear.

“But don’t worry,” Ryōshū continued, her tone shifting abruptly to a more casual, almost welcoming one. The sudden change was disorienting, adding to the unsettling atmosphere. “I think that Gregor’s just finished up a fresh batch.” She gestured towards a small, rickety table tucked away in a dimly lit corner of the kitchen. It was the only table in the room that wasn’t covered in blood or scattered with tools, more similar to the ones that were back in the dining area. “Why don’t you just take a seat?” she suggested, her smile widening, but her eyes still held that cold, calculating glint.

The casual invitation had alarm bells ringing in your head, you didn't really intend to actually try anything. It was clear this wasn't a genuine offer of hospitality; if you were who you say you are you wouldn't hesitate. But were you really gonna sit there and eat what could possibly be human flesh from people that had been kidnapped from the Backstreets?

Reluctantly, you take your seat at the table. The wooden surface felt sticky beneath your fingertips, and you instinctively recoiled slightly, trying to avoid touching it more than necessary. The table wobbled precariously as you sat down, threatening to tip over at any moment. The dim light from the lights hanging above cast long, distorted shadows across the room, making the already gruesome scene even more unsettling. From this vantage point, the cloth-covered table in the center of the room seemed even more prominent, its unsettling shape casting a long, ominous shadow that stretched across the blood-stained floor.

The metallic scent was overpowering here, and you fought back the rising nausea, focusing on maintaining your composure. You could feel Ryōshū’s eyes on you, watching your every move, scrutinizing your reactions. You forced yourself to meet her gaze, offering a neutral, almost polite nod, trying to project an air of calm indifference that you certainly didn't feel.

The kitchen was eerily silent now, save for the muffled sounds from beneath the cloth and the occasional drip of liquid from somewhere unseen. The silence was heavy, filled with tension, and it amplified the unsettling atmosphere of the room. You could feel the weight of Ryōshū's gaze, the unspoken threat that hung in the air between you. You knew that sitting at this table was a dangerous game, but you had come too far to turn back now. There was no progress without a little sacrifice after all right?

Just as the silence threatened to become unbearable, a figure emerged

from the deeper recesses of the kitchen, disappearing from view behind a wall of stacked crates and what looked like butchered animal carcasses hanging from hooks. This must be Gregor, Ryōshū's accomplice. He was a stocky figure, short and broad-shouldered, with thick, corded arms that spoke of a strength easily greater than yours. His face was one of apparant boredom or disdain, a red substance splattered across his face, and his eyes were shadowed and unreadable. He moved with a surprising lightness for his size, his footsteps barely audible on the blood-soaked floor.

He carried a platter in his hands, and on it sat a single meat pie. It was similar in appearance to the miniature pies displayed at the counter, perfectly formed and decorated with intricate pastry patterns, but this one was considerably larger, almost the size of a dinner plate. Steam curled upwards from the pie, carrying with it a rich, savory aroma that mingled with the metallic scent in the air, creating a truly nauseating combination. The savory scent, however tempting it might have been under normal circumstances, now carried a sinister undertone, a hint of something…off.

Gregor approached the table, his eyes fixed on you, his expression unreadable. He placed the platter down in front of you with a soft thud, the sound echoing in the otherwise silent kitchen. He didn't speak, didn't even acknowledge your presence with a nod or a glance. He simply placed the pie down and then stepped back, walking back past Ryoshu, who was watching you intently, her smile still fixed on her face. She remained there with you her eyes boring into you, creating an atmosphere of intense scrutiny. The only sounds in the room were the buzzing lights, the occasional drip of liquid, and the soft hiss of steam rising from the meat pie, a silent invitation, or perhaps a challenge. The stage was set, the performance was about to begin, and you were the star.

The tension in the room thickened as Ryōshū stepped forward, her smile widening into something that resembled a grimace. "Here," she said, her voice dropping to a low, almost seductive whisper, "I'll cut a B.S. just for you." The way she emphasized the acronym, drawing out the "B" and the "S," sent another shiver down your spine.

She reached inside her jacket and produced a knife. It wasn't a standard kitchen knife; it was a work of art, a testament to exquisite craftsmanship. The blade was long and slender, made of gleaming, polished steel that reflected the dim light like a mirror. The handle was crafted from dark, intricately carved wood, inlaid with what looked like polished bone or ivory. It was a beautiful, yet undeniably

menacing object, its sharp edge promising swift and precise cuts. The way she handled it, with a practiced ease and a subtle flick of her wrist, suggested she was intimately familiar with its use.

The sudden appearance of the knife, coupled with her cryptic words, amplified the already unsettling atmosphere. You could feel the weight of Ryōshū's gaze, her eyes gleaming with a manic intensity as she held the knife aloft. You could imagine one stroke of her wrist is all it would take for her to lodge that thing several inches into your neck.

She moved towards the platter, her movements fluid and graceful. With a swift, practiced motion, she sliced into the meat pie, the sharp blade cutting through the crisp pastry crust with ease. A plume of steam escaped from the incision, carrying with it a mouthwatering mixture of savory scents. As she cut, she glanced at you, her smile unwavering, her eyes holding a chilling glint. The way she handled the knife, the way she looked at you, it wasn't just about cutting a pie. It was a performance, a show, an art piece in the making.

The slice of pie, perfectly cut, was now held inches from your face, the steam still curling upwards, carrying with it that delicious aroma. Ryōshū's eyes, gleaming with a disturbing mix of anticipation and amusement, were fixed on you, waiting for your reaction. "O.W.," she said, emphasizing the acronym, her voice low and smooth, almost a purr. You could feel the heat from the pie radiating onto your face, and the combined scents were almost overwhelming at this close range.

You had to maintain your composure, to not betray the growing unease that was building inside you. You couldn't show weakness, not here, not now. You met her gaze, trying to project an air of nonchalant curiosity, even though every instinct was screaming at you to recoil. The slice of pie, held so close, offered a closer look at its contents. You could see the rich, dark filling, a mixture of what appeared to be finely minced meat and vegetables, coated in a thick, dark gravy. But there was something else there too, something that didn't quite belong. There were small, dark flecks scattered throughout the filling, and something that looked suspiciously like bone fragments.

Ryōshū's expectant gaze intensified, her smile widening slightly, as if she was enjoying your discomfort. The spotlight was on you, and Ryōshū was waiting for your next move. You take a deep breath, steeling your nerves. With a deliberate motion, you open your mouth

and bite into the offered slice of pie. The pastry is crisp and flaky, crumbling slightly as your teeth sink into it. The filling is rich and savory, a complex blend of flavors that initially masks the more unsettling aspects. The texture is… varied. There's the soft, yielding texture of the meat, the slight crunch of the vegetables, and then the bone fragements. But they are suprisngly soft, cooked down into crunchy, but palettable pieces.

The initial savory taste quickly gives way to something else, a deeper melting lingers on your tongue. That incredible aroma, previously masked by the steam, now becomes even more pronounced as the pie is in your mouth. The combination of flavors and textures is almost so overwhelming, and you fight back the urge to stuff more into your mouth right then and there. It's unbelievably good.

As you chew, you try to discern the different elements of the filling. The meat is finely minced, almost ground, making it difficult to identify its source. The vegetables are small and diced, seemingly ordinary carrots and potatoes. But it's the other elements that disturb you. The meat is unlike anything that you have ever tasted before, it couldn't be anything that was local to the city. Ryōshū watches you intently, her smile unwavering, her eyes gleaming with a mix of anticipation and something else, something that looks almost like triumph. She’s waiting for your reaction, waiting to see if you can truly stomach her culinary artistry.

You swallow down the bite, not even having to force your face to act like it was enjoyable. Perhaps it would be easier than you thought to keep this up. “I-it’s delicious,” you stammer, the words catching slightly in your throat. You try to sound convincing, but the potential that you are still eating human flesh clouds over you. “I’ve never had anything quite like it,” you add, which is undeniably true.

Ryōshū’s smile widens, a predatory gleam in her eyes. It’s clear she sees through your thinly veiled attempt at politeness, but she doesn’t call you out on it. Instead, she seems pleased, almost vindicated. “I’m glad you approve,” she purrs, her voice laced with a dark satisfaction. “Most here are simply to enamoured with the taste to even stop and truly appriciate it.” She glances towards the covered table, a subtle gesture that you don't fail to pick up on.

The silence stretches for a moment, perhaps even a little too long. Ryōshū continues to watch you, her eyes scrutinizing your every move, searching for any sign of weakness. You can feel the weight of her gaze, the unspoken threat that hangs in the air between you. You

know that simply complimenting the pie isn't enough. You need to keep the conversation going, to gather more information, to understand what's really going on in this kitchen. If it's so good, then keep eating," she says, her voice low and smooth. "Don't be afraid." The words themselves are innocuous enough, but the way she says them, the way she looks at you. It's not an invitation; it's an order.

She then slowly steps around the side of the table. The feeling of her presence behind you is unnerving. You can feel her breath on the back of your neck, hot and wet. It's an invasion of your personal space, a deliberate act of intimidation. You can feel her leaning over you, her gaze fixed on the pie, and then on you, scrutinizing your every reaction. The proximity is suffocating, with her almost on top of you. You force yourself to take another bite, though every instinct screams at you to refuse. But even if it's wrong the taste is somehow even more delicious now, the moist texture simply melting in your mouth. You chew slowly, deliberately, trying to maintain your composure, even as your tastebuds practically dance in your mouth.

Ryōshū then reaches forward, her hand moving into your field of vision. The dark stains on her fingers are even more noticeable now, almost black in the dim light. She picks up another slice of the pie, the sharp knife flashing in the light as she cuts it. The sound of the blade slicing through the pastry is amplified in the empitness of the kitchen, each scrape of metal against ceramic resounding through your head.

But soon enough the pretense of politeness is gone. Ryōshū's seemingly unsatisfied with the pace at which you are eating. She doesn't offer the next slice; she forces it upon you. With a swift, almost aggressive movement, she prods the side of your face with the edge of the pie slice. The pastry crumbles slightly against your skin, leaving a greasy residue. Before you can even begin to protest, to pull away or refuse, she shoves the slice into your mouth.

The unexpected force of the action is jarring, and you nearly choke on the pie. The flavors and textures immediately becoming the forefront of your mind again. You can feel yourself starting to lose yourself in it, the taste of blood is undeniable. The forced feeding isn't out of hate or malice, she's clearly taking some kind of perverse pleasure in feeding it to you. Watching someone devour her artwork, even if it wasn't by their own hand.

You are forced to chew and swallow, the pie becoming a part of you just as much as it was of her. Ryōshū watches you intently, her smile now a chillingly wide grin, her eyes gleaming with a manic intensity.

The proximity of her face, the feeling of her breath on your skin, the flavors entrapping your tongue. You feel trapped, cornered, like a prey animal caught in a predator's snare. The forced feeding continues, a relentless onslaught of pie slices that seems to have no end. With each bite, the experience becomes progressively more controlling.

The initial savory flavor is completely gone, replaced by the overwhelming metallic tang of blood and the gritty texture of bone fragments. The pie is now a congealed mass of unrecognizable ingredients, and the smell alone is enough to make your stomach churn.

Ryōshū's demeanor changes as the forced feeding progresses. The initial amusement gives way to something more intense, almost obsessive. She seems almost enamored by your forced consumption, her eyes gleaming with a disturbing mix of fascination and triumph. Her hand, the one feeding you, becomes more intimate with each passing moment. Her fingers brush against your lips, your cheeks, and even enter your mouth, wiping off the meat pie residue on your tongue with a disturbingly tender touch. It's a grotesque display of affection, something of a connection that you two share.

Her other hand, the one not holding the pie, now rests firmly on your head, holding it still as she forces the food into your mouth. The pressure of her hand is unnerving, preventing you from turning away or resisting. You are completely at her mercy, forced to endure her ministrations. The kitchen, with its blood-splattered walls, scattered tools, and the ominous shape beneath the cloth, has become a chamber of horrors.

When you finally manage to swallow the last bite, your mouth is a mess. The pie filling is smeared across your lips and face, a thick, greasy coating of unrecognizable ingredients. The metallic scent clings to you, and the texture lingers on your tongue. Ryōshū then takes her fingers, now also covered in the pie filling, and one by one, almost sloppily, wipes them across your lips and tongue, forcing you to lick off the residue. It's a deliberate act of humiliation, or maybe it's love? Pleased that you had eaten all of it.

"L.A.T," she says, her voice laced with a mixture of amusement and satisfaction. "You didn't even leave a scrap remaining." She looks at you, her eyes gleaming, her smile wide and unsettling. The kitchen remains silent except for the occasional drip of liquid and your own ragged breathing.

The tense silence of the kitchen is abruptly shattered by a sudden commotion erupting from the dining area. Shouting, the clatter of dishes, and the sound of something heavy being overturned fill the air, creating a stark contrast to the quiet horror of the kitchen. Ryōshū's expression shifts from satisfied amusement to one of annoyance. She clicks her tongue, a sharp, disapproving sound.

"Tch, unbelievable," she mutters under her breath, her eyes narrowing. She turns and walks out from behind you, her footsteps echoing on the blood-stained floor as she heads towards the source of the noise. As she leaves, she glances back at you, her eyes holding a warning. "Just stay right there," she says, her voice low and firm. "I still have something else for you."

With Ryōshū gone, the kitchen is plunged into an even more oppressive silence. The only sounds now are the occasional drip of liquid, your own heavy breathing, and the distant sounds of the commotion from the dining area, now slightly muffled by the closing door. You are alone, for the moment, in this gruesome chamber, but you are alone with all the evidence you need. While you aren't completelys safe and the threat of Ryōshū's return hangs heavy in the air. This might be your one and only chance.

You take a moment, every nerve on high alert, to listen intently. The commotion from the dining area continues, providing a faint cover for your movements. You strain your ears, making absolutely sure that neither Ryōshū nor Gregor is returning to the kitchen. The only sounds are the muffled shouts and crashes from beyond the door, confirming that they are preoccupied.

With a surge of adrenaline, you move quickly and quietly towards the cloth-covered object on the central table. The closer you get, the more the unsettling shape becomes defined. You reach the table and, with a swift, decisive motion, you yank the cloth away.

Beneath the heavy canvas, there's no body. Relief washes over you, a wave so intense it almost makes you weak. Instead of a human form, you find a meticulously arranged display of the meat pie filling. There are various cuts of meat, carefully positioned to resemble a torso and limbs. Vegetables, such as potatoes and carrots, are used to create the illusion of bones and joints. However, it is shockingly accurate. A quick look into the exposed chest shows defined musculature and internal organs. The whole gruesome display is designed to create a disturbing illusion, a centerpiece for Ryōshū's twisted culinary theater.

The relief at not finding a body is quickly followed by a wave of nausea. The sheer artistry of the deception, the meticulous attention to detail, is deeply unsettling.

“Couldn’t S.S, could you?” she says, her voice low and menacing, the words dripping with disdain. The knife she used to cut the pie is still in her hand, the blade gleaming in the dim light. Her eyes are fixed on you, burning with a furious intensity. The relief you felt moments ago at discovering the deception is instantly replaced by a renewed sense of dread. You’ve been caught, red-handed, snooping where you were told not to.

The sudden voice behind you sends a jolt of fear through your body. You whirl around, your heart pounding in your chest. Ryōshū stands in the doorway leading back to the dining area, her expression no longer one of amusement or manic intensity, but of cold, hard anger. The commotion from the dining area has subsided, suggesting she dealt with whatever disturbance had occurred.

Before you can even react, before you can formulate a plan or make a move to defend yourself, Gregor appears behind you. His prosthetic hand clamps down on your shoulder, vise-like, preventing any chance of escape. The suddenness of his appearance, combined with the force of his grip, leaves you momentarily stunned.

Ryōshū’s eyes remain fixed on you, her expression a mask of cold fury. Gregor’s grip tightens, his fingers digging into your shoulder, a painful reminder of your precarious situation. You can feel the heat radiating from Ryōshū, the palpable anger that emanates from her like a physical force. The knife in her hand seems to gleam even brighter in the dim light, a silent threat hanging in the air.

Despite the crushing grip on your shoulder, you refuse to give up. Adrenaline surges through you, fueling a desperate attempt to break free. You twist your body, using your momentum to try and wrench yourself away from Gregor’s grasp. You lash out with a sharp elbow strike aimed at his ribs, a move that actually manages to connect, momentarily stunning him. His grip loosens just enough for you to gain a sliver of space.

However, the brief respite is short-lived. Gregor recovers quickly, his annoyance clear by your attack. With a guttural growl, he delivers a rough, powerful strike to your chest. The force of the blow knocks the wind out of you, sending a searing pain through your ribs. You double over, gasping for air, your vision momentarily blurring.

As you double over, Ryōshū slowly walks up behind you, her movements unhurried. You catch a glint of metal in your peripheral vision—a syringe, filled with a clear liquid. The sight of it sends a fresh wave of panic through you. You try to straighten up, to turn and face her, but the pain in your chest is too intense, and Gregor's grip, though weakened, still holds you in place. You are completely vulnerable, a captive audience for whatever Ryōshū intends to inject you with. The syringe, poised to pierce your skin, is held delicately in her hand.

"Careful, you D.B.," Ryōshū hisses, her voice laced with a cold fury as she refers to Gregor with the acronym. "You could have bruised the meat." The casual way she speaks of you, as if you were nothing more than a piece of meat to be prepared, is off putting. The pain in your chest is still intense, making it difficult to breathe, but the sight of the syringe, now poised at your neck, overrides the physical pain with a surge of terror.

But theres nothing you can do as Ryōshū plunges the needle into your neck. A sharp, stinging sensation pierces your skin, followed by a burning feeling as the liquid is injected into your bloodstream. The world around you begins to blur, your vision becoming hazy and distorted. Your head feels heavy, and your limbs grow weak. You try to focus, to fight against the effects of the injection, but it's a losing battle.

Ryōshū pulls the syringe out, her eyes fixed on you, despite everything she seems content. As your vision fades and your consciousness slips away, you hear her voice, low and smooth, laced with a chilling promise. "But don't worry," she whispers, her words echoing in your ears as the world fades to black. "You'll be my most beautiful creation yet." The last thing you perceive is the metallic scent of blood and the faint, as you're dragged along the floor.

End Notes

R.B. = Ryoshu's Bistro
F.M.P. = Famous Meat Pies
A.P. = Absolute Perfection
M.A.G.I.C = Masterful Application of Gastronomic Ingredients and Culinary techniques
S.E.N.S.E.S. = Sensational Edible Novelties Stimulating Every Sense
P.E.R.F.E.C.T.I.O.N = Idfk
B.S. = Big Slice
O.W. = Open WIde
S.S. = Sit Still
D.B. = Dumb Brute

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